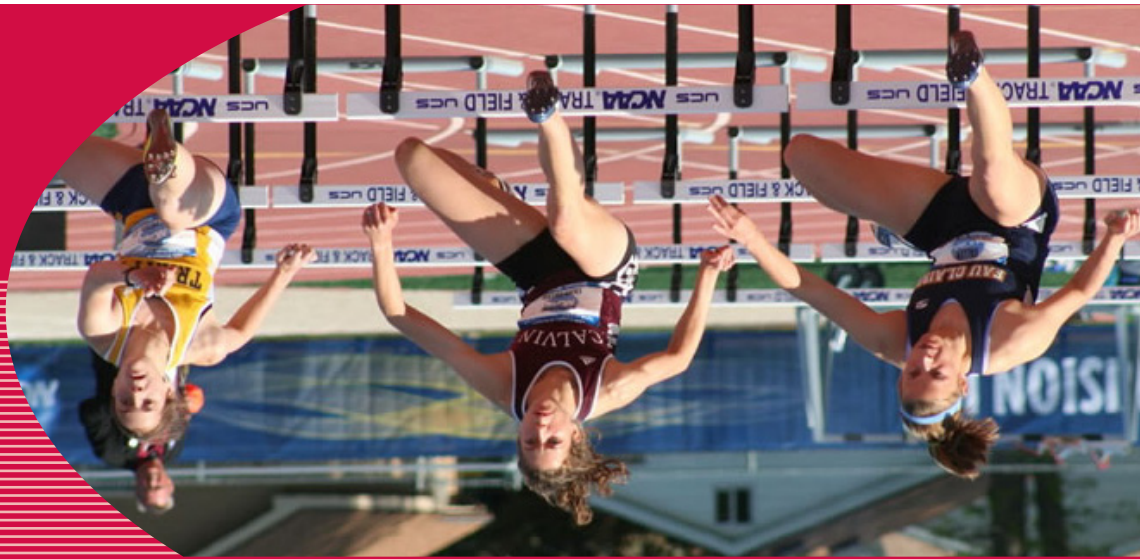


# Athletic Scholarships



[www.EducationUSA.state.gov](http://www.EducationUSA.state.gov)

## EducationUSA Advising Centers

Fulbright New Zealand - [educate@fulbright.org.nz](mailto:educate@fulbright.org.nz) / (04) 494 1504

Consulate General of the United States of America - [aucklandeducation@state.gov](mailto:aucklandeducation@state.gov) / (09) 303 2724



What is "Eligibility Certification"?  
Any prospective student-athlete who will enroll in college and plans to compete in NCAA Division I or Division II athletics must register with the eligibility center. The NCAA Eligibility Center will certify the academic and amateur credentials of all college-bound student-athletes who wish to compete in NCAA Division I or II athletics. Keep in mind that the eligibility center is not a placement agency and it does not guarantee admission to universities.

Eligibility Center customer service:  
Representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., U.S. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.  
International callers: +1 317-223-0700.  
Mailing Address: NCAA Eligibility Center  
P.O. Box 7136 / Indianapolis, IN 46207 USA  
[www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org)

**Are you a talented athlete who would like to study for a degree in the United States?**  
**Are you currently competing in a sport at a high level of excellence?**  
**Then you might be a perfect candidate for a sports scholarship.**

### ★ General Information about Athletic Scholarships

The competition for athletic scholarships varies from college to college in the US. The NCAA Division I schools, with the big teams and the big budgets, are fiercely competitive. To stand any chance at these schools, you should be ranked in at least the top 10 in New Zealand in your chosen sport. Division II schools are not so competitive, but they don't have as much money to give either. Some schools with excellent sports programmes - notably the Ivy League and all Division III institutions - do not offer athletic scholarships but offer financial assistance based solely on need.

### ★ The major athletic organisations in the US

Most colleges and universities in the US with athletic programmes come under one of three major collegiate athletic organisations in the US: the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA), and the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA).

#### The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

This is the oldest and best-known collegiate sports organisation. It divides colleges into three separate divisions when it comes to athletics. Division I includes the strongest teams and contains about one-third of the NCAA's members. This is where you will find the big athletic programmes, and the scholarship budgets at these schools can be huge.

#### National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)

Division II schools maintain competitive athletic programmes, although the squads are somewhat smaller and Division II schools award fewer scholarships each year.

#### National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)

Division III is very different to the other two divisions. Under NCAA rules, Division III schools may not award financial aid on the basis of athletic ability. They may only offer financial aid based on need.

Members of the NAIA and NJCAA are mainly smaller schools (two-year colleges in the case of the NJCAA) and they traditionally do not recruit as vigorously as NCAA members.

### ★ What do I need to do?

1. **Start early.** The preparation and application process requires careful planning. No matter where you apply, you'll need to meet all of the normal college entrance requirements. It's important to understand that many athletic scholarships do not cover the full cost of tuition and living expenses, so it's a good idea to investigate other possible types of assistance and to plan to have some money of your own available as a top-up.

2. **Graduate from High school** – “secondary school”. Find your country in the Academic Guide for International Student-Athletes and review the graduation requirements and minimum grade point average (GPA) for you. [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)

3. **Find a school:** See NCAA sports for a list of US institutions. Division I schools are most highly competitive and have the most scholarships available. You may also look at the NCAA website where you will find a public recognition list by sport for schools awarded high academic honors. [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)

- Ask your coach or other student-athletes for recommendations.
- Always consider your academic goals as well as your athletic.

4. **Register with the eligibility center.** Fill out the “Student Release Form” for international students. For most international students, your certification status will be evaluated after your final academic records are completed and forwarded to the eligibility center. It is critically important to fulfill the NCAA's secondary school “core courses” requirement.

There are no deadlines to register. However, students must be certified before receiving an athletics scholarship or practicing/competing with an NCAA Division I or II school.

5. **Take the SAT or ACT** (required for NCAA certification; may not be required by NAIA member institutions depending on your secondary school grade point average and if you graduated in the top half of your school).

- NCAA Division I: Please see the Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete and minimum test-score requirements.
- NCAA Division II: A minimum 820 combined score on the SAT verbal and math sections, or a minimum sum score of 68 on the ACT is required.
- When taking the ACT or SAT, send your test scores to the eligibility center (the code is “9999”). In addition, most international students will be required to take an English language proficiency exam such as TOEFL or IELTS during the college/university application process.

6. **Draft a sports CV that includes your accomplishments within your sport.**

The CV should be 1-2 pages and to the point, preferably in bullet point format, providing information about your achievements and goals. Include contact information, graduation date, intended major, and a few details such as SAT/ ACT scores (or projected testing dates), current GPA, and class ranking/size.

7. **Write a cover letter to the head coach at each institution that explains both your academic and athletic abilities** (this is where the sport CV comes in as an easy reference tool for athletic accomplishments). Include a reference from a current or former coach in your correspondence with university coaches.

8. **Apply to US colleges or universities.** The following sites will give you valuable information on the application process if needed.

- EducationUSA website [www.educationusa.state.gov](http://www.educationusa.state.gov)
- Fulbright New Zealand's website [www.fulbright.org.nz](http://www.fulbright.org.nz)
- Contact one of your EducationUSA advisors:

Wellington - Kara Wood, (04) 494 1504, [educate@fulbright.org.nz](mailto:educate@fulbright.org.nz)

Auckland - Christy Wall, (09) 303 2724, [aucklandeducation@state.gov](mailto:aucklandeducation@state.gov)

<http://newzealand.usembassy.gov>

### ★ Online Resources For Researching Collegiate Athletics In The US

#### National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

- Includes the informative “Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete”
- Academic Guide for International Student-Athletes
- International Students – Frequently Asked Questions
- Summary of recruiting rules for each sport  
[www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)

#### National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)

- Includes 510 junior colleges, some of which offer financial support for student-athletes. Search for the “NJCAA Eligibility Rules Pamphlet”.  
[www.njcaa.org](http://www.njcaa.org)

#### National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)

- Includes 350 small college athletics programmes, most of which offer financial support for student-athletes. Search for “A Guide for the College-Bound Athlete”.  
[www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org)

Find a school offering your sport: Peterson's College Search or NCAA sports.  
[www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)